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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-first session
13 May-7 June 1991
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Boris GOUDIMA (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993

Section 11A. Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation

1. At its 38th and 46th meetings, on 4 and 8 June 1991, the Committee considered section 11A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

Discussion

2. The Committee regretted that the format of section 11A did not follow that of other sections and expressed its concern that the programme narrative did not clearly define the activities the Office intended to undertake during the biennium 1992-1993 in order to accomplish the objectives of the medium-term plan.

3. While recognizing the importance of coordination functions, some delegations pointed out that the Office was also responsible for providing the impetus to and direction of the economic and social development activities of the United Nations. In this connection, some delegations drew particular attention to the fact that while dramatic economic and political changes in

the East had affected East-West relations, the North-South situation continued to require urgent attention by the international community and by the Office of the Director-General.

4. The Committee expressed its concern that the programme narrative of the Office did not specify how the Office proposed to provide innovative responses to emerging trends or how it proposed to direct and guide the economic and social development activities throughout the system. The Committee regretted that the expected results of the activities in the proposed programme budget were not clear.

5. The Committee noted that programme 45 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development), was included in section 11A of the proposed programme budget essentially for presentation purposes and that the Department of Public Information and the Economic Commission for Africa had full responsibility for those functions falling within their respective mandates.

6. Some delegations pointed out that the final review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 had not yet taken place and would be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

7. Some delegations expressed their concern that the Office of the Director-General and the Department of Public Information were to be allocated more resources than the Economic Commission for Africa. Many delegations were of the view that the proposals for action were inadequate and noted that revisions would be made to reflect their concerns.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee recommended that a separate and identifiable unit be established within the Office of the Director-General to undertake those activities that fell within its responsibility as proposed under programme 45 of the medium-term plan.

9. The Committee recommended that adequate resources be provided for the economic recovery and development of Africa, commensurate with the high priority accorded to it by the General Assembly.

10. The Committee also recommended that the various activities provided for under programme 45 of the medium-term plan be implemented on the basis of an innovative approach, in a balanced and coordinated manner, taking into account the responsibility of both the international community and the African countries as mentioned in the pertinent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the critical economic situation and development of Africa.

11. The Committee further recommended that these activities might possibly be amended when the medium-term plan was revised in the light of decisions which the General Assembly might take at its forty-sixth session after final evaluation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

12. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of the programme narrative of section 11A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, subject to the above recommendations and to decisions of the Economic and Social Council and on the understanding that the regular budget resources requested for this section by the Secretary-General would be adequate, with the following modifications:

Subprogramme 1. Mobilization of resources

13. During the biennium 1992-1993, the subprogramme will aim at:

(a) Promoting the translation of the commitment of the international community into concrete action, including increased financial flows to assist Africa;

(b) Ensuring adequate resources for the implementation of the system-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development and monitoring its follow-up through intersecretariat as well as intergovernmental mechanisms;

(c) Promoting specific action to help African countries regarding conditionalities associated with resource flows to Africa and to support economic reforms in the region;

(d) Promoting international efforts towards the improvement of commodity issues, including markets, taking into account long-term trends;

(e) Mobilizing resources for diversification of the African economy;

(f) Strengthening of the efforts of the African Governments to improve their own economic policy.

Activities

International cooperation

14. To carry out, in close cooperation with the organizations of the system concerned, a study on the overall resource flows to Africa so as to facilitate efforts to mobilize additional resources for African economic recovery and development.

15. To organize two annual meetings with representatives of donor countries in New York and to carry out three missions to donor countries, including meetings with development assistance agencies with a view to securing increased official development assistance for African countries.

16. To consult UNDP and the World Bank annually, with a view to promoting and enhancing round tables and consultative group meetings in order to make them more effective in mobilizing resources for African countries.

17. To coordinate the support provided by the United Nations to African countries, at their request, in the preparation for round tables and consultative group meetings.

18. To provide inputs to meetings of relevant international financial institutions and other relevant meetings and, where appropriate, participate in such meetings with a view to promoting greater financial flows, including solutions to the debt problems of African countries.

19. To mobilize resources for activities envisaged in subprogramme 3 (The campaign for global awareness of the critical economic situation in Africa).

20. To cooperate with relevant non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations involved in efforts to address African economic recovery and development, particularly the Global Coalition for Africa and the Africa Leadership Forum.

Meetings

21. To organize, in close cooperation with the international organizations and corporations concerned, two subregional meetings to promote foreign direct investment in Africa.

Inter-agency cooperation

22. To ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the system-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development, and monitor its follow-up through intersecretariat as well as intergovernmental mechanisms.

23. In close cooperation with the organizations concerned, to promote the implementation of recommendations relating to African commodity problems, in particular the diversification of African economies.

24. In close cooperation with the organizations concerned, to work for the full implementation of the provisions of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, in particular provisions relating to resource flows to these countries.

Subprogramme 2. Monitoring, assessment and follow-up of the implementation of action programmes, including their financial aspects

25. During the biennium, this subprogramme will aim at:

(a) Analysing financial flows, multilateral or bilateral, available or required for African economic recovery and development and their relationships to domestic economic policies;

(b) Studying the problems encountered in the implementation of specific activities designed to address the economic and social emergency situation in Africa.

Activities

Inter-agency cooperation

26. To arrange and provide substantive and technical support to meetings of the United Nations Inter-agency Task Force which will convene approximately eight sessions during the biennium to ensure the coherent implementation by the organizations of the system of decisions of the General Assembly and other relevant intergovernmental bodies relating to African economic recovery and development.

Meetings

27. To arrange two inter-agency meetings on how the United Nations system can contribute to African efforts towards the economic integration of Africa.

28. In close cooperation with the organizations concerned, to convene an expert group meeting to assist African countries in setting up mechanisms for the implementation of the African Charter for Popular Participation and Transformation.

Parliamentary services

29. To coordinate and ensure that the organizations of the system provide inputs to the reports on activities of the system relating to assistance in the economic recovery and development of Africa.

30. To report annually to the General Assembly on progress made in the monitoring, assessment and follow-up of the implementation of action programmes for African economic recovery and development.

Subprogramme 3. The campaign for global awareness of the critical economic situation in Africa

31. During the biennium 1992-1993, the subprogramme will aim at:

(a) Raising international awareness of the critical economic situation in Africa;

(b) Providing information on the efforts and reforms - both political and economic - being undertaken by African countries to revive or enhance economic and social growth, as well as on the vital role of external resources and actions in support of African recovery;

(c) Providing information support for the activities listed under subprogrammes 1 and 2 above.

Activities

(a) Publications

(i) African Recovery periodical

32. African Recovery shall be published on a quarterly basis in English and French (24,000 copies of each issue in English and 8,000 in French). It is intended primarily for the media, the non-governmental community and other opinion makers in academic and research institutions, government officials and the like in Africa and internationally. The periodical will report on important new developments, ideas, studies and conferences relating to African recovery; produce carefully researched articles on resource flows (including debt), commodities and trade; produce reports on selected African countries, and discuss the policies and programmes they are pursuing to revive economic growth; and highlight the role played by donor countries and the United Nations system in support of Africa, the impediments to recovery and so forth.

(ii) Briefing papers

33. Eight briefing papers shall be produced on specific themes of special concern to Africa targeted at the specialized media and opinion makers in academic and research institutions and government offices (8,000 copies each). Briefing papers on African debt, African least developed countries and African population policies have already been produced. For the biennium 1992-1993, briefing papers will be prepared on regional cooperation and integration; resource flows and debt; trade, commodities and diversification; mobilizing foreign direct investment; and the challenge of food security and self-sufficiency, among other subjects.

(iii) Press kits

34. Press kits will be produced to enhance world-wide press coverage on important United Nations reports on Africa. Two will be produced during the biennium 1992-1993.

(b) Mass media promotion

(iv) Television and radio programmes

35. To work closely with the Department of Public Information to produce radio and television programmes. Major features will be produced in 1992-1993 for both radio and television, highlighting the decisions and goals of the final review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, as well as steps taken by African Governments and the international community.

(v) Journalists travelling seminars

36. To organize two seminars to enable senior donor-country and African journalists to see first hand the efforts being made by African countries to initiate or accelerate growth, the domestic and external constraints to growth and the efforts of the international community.

(vi) Coverage of African conferences

37. To provide briefs for international journalists with a view to encouraging their attendance at conferences and meetings relating to African economic recovery and development.

(vii) Articles for major media

38. To write and submit at least six articles for major international newspapers highlighting the concerns of African countries, the steps taken by them to promote their economic development and the efforts of the international community.

(c) Liaison

(viii) Media and other groups

39. To organize and maintain regular contacts and liaison with media and other important target groups, such as parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and academic institutions in order to enlist support for actions being undertaken or that need to be undertaken. In this context, to ensure that African economic recovery and development is a topic for the meetings of the non-governmental organizations envisaged by the Department of Public Information in subprogramme 2 (Information services) of programme 38 (Public information) of the medium-term plan.